

text for the Our Father is set by the sacramental presence of Christ in the community of the Church on earth. Now that Christ has become present among us in the sacrament, we are able—we are emboldened—to call God *our* Father; the previous uses of the term *Father*, in the Preface and Canon, would have referred primarily to him as Father within the Holy Trinity and as the origin of all things. The context for the Our Father, set by the presence of Christ among us as our savior and brother, is contrasted with the celestial context set earlier by the Preface and Sanctus. After the Great Amen we return to earth, so to speak, to the place of the Incarnation, with Christ now sacramentally present with us, and we begin to prepare for our individual communion with him by reciting the prayer he taught us to say.

If the Our Father follows the Eucharistic Prayer, the offertory prayers precede it. In them we take bread and wine out of their normal usage and dedicate them to God as our offering of the fruits of the earth, to be transformed by him into the presence of Christ. In the traditional liturgy it was customary to sing a Marian hymn at the offertory, a practice that was highly appropriate, since the Blessed Virgin is the supreme instance of the dedication of our own nature to the service of God, to become the instrument of his presence among us. Mary's fiat is echoed in the offertory of the Mass.

I would like to close these reflections on the prayers of the priest by making a suggestion for thanksgiving after Mass. In the old rite, the prayer called the Placeat and the Prologue to St. John's Gospel were said toward the end of Mass, before and after the final blessing and dismissal. This prayer and gospel are not used in the new rite, but they can well be recommended as private prayers of the priest after Mass is over. In the Placeat the priest prays that the sacrifice he has just offered be pleasing to the Holy Trinity and that it be beneficial for himself and those for whom it was offered. In the Prologue to St. John's Gospel we recall the preexistence of the Word as God with God, the coming of the Word as life and light for men, the acceptance and rejection of the Word, the contrast between John the Baptist and Jesus, and the Incarnation of the Word among us. These prayerful and biblical thoughts are appropriate as part of the priest's thanksgiving after the sacrifice of the Mass and the reception of communion. The fact that they were included in the Mass in the old rite shows that their suitability for the Eucharist was recognized in earlier ages. Using them as prayers of thanksgiving will remind us of the continuity between the old rite of the Mass and the new.

[7]

## THE EUCHARIST AND TRANSUBSTANTIATION

Christian theology is reflection on the faith of the Church. The Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, receives and teaches her faith and when necessary defines it. Theology reflects on this faith, in a manner analogous to the way in which philosophy reflects on prephilosophical life and conversation. Theology is the exercise of reason within faith, and scholastic theology is reason's self-discovery within faith.

Theology helps bring out the intelligibility of the deposit of faith. The intelligibility is already there in faith and revelation, and theology helps to make it manifest. It performs this service for the benefit of the Church and the faithful, and also simply for the distinctive understanding that faith can bring.

### *Two theological issues regarding the Eucharist*

When we reflect on what the Church believes concerning the Eucharist, two theological issues come into prominence: the identity of the sacrifice between Calvary and the Mass, and Transubstantiation or the Real Presence of Christ in the sacrament.

Regarding the identity of the sacrifice, the Church holds that one and the same sacrifice is offered on Calvary and in the Eucharist, first in a bloody and then in a sacramental manner. The two ways in which the sacrifice is offered do not mean that two sacrifices are offered; rather, a single sacrifice is offered by the incarnate Son of God to God the Father. As regards the

temporal structure of this mystery, we can formulate the identity between Calvary and the Eucharist in two ways. We can begin with the sacrifice of Calvary and say that it is reenacted when the Church offers the sacrifice of the Eucharist (that is, we can say that the past sacrifice is brought forward to the present moment). Conversely, we can begin with the present liturgy and say that in the sacrifice of the Mass the participants are brought into the presence of Calvary (that is, the present community is brought back to the past moment). We can say either that the past becomes present or that the present is brought to the past. Both ways of speaking are equivalent, but both obviously are paradoxical or "beyond belief" when viewed within the horizon of human history. Clearly, the belief in the singularity of the sacrifice does raise a problem, since the temporal distance between the two historical events (the death of Christ and the celebration of the Eucharist) seems at first glance to exclude the possibility of a single action. We will have more to say later concerning this topic.

The second theological issue in the Church's eucharistic faith is that of the Real Presence of Christ in the sacrament. This is the issue of Transubstantiation, according to which the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, while retaining the appearances and the natural characteristics of bread and wine.

The identity of the sacrifice and the question of Transubstantiation are two different issues, but they are closely related: how could the Eucharist be the same sacrifice as that of Calvary if Christ were not truly present to offer himself to the Father? Without the Real Presence of Christ, the same event or the same action could not take place.

Both issues are present in St. Thomas Aquinas's treatment of the Eucharist, but in his work by far the greater emphasis is placed on the theme of the Real Presence. Most of Thomas's discussion in Questions 73-83 of Part III of the *Summa Theologiae* is concerned with the question of how the matter of the sacrament is changed: how the substance of the bread and of the wine become the body and blood of the Lord, while continuing to appear and to react as bread and wine. Thomas also gives much attention to the effect the sacrament has on those who receive it. He gives relatively little space, however, to the question of the identity between the sacrifice of the Eucharist and the sacrifice of Calvary. Indeed, when he addresses this topic, he says simply that "the celebration of this sacrament is a certain representative im-

age of the passion of Christ, which is the true immolation of him," and this representative function of the Eucharist is compared with the representation provided by the figures of the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> It is even compared with the altar as representing the cross on which Christ was sacrificed.<sup>2</sup> Thomas insists that there is only one sacrifice, that of Christ himself,<sup>3</sup> but he speaks of the Mass more as an image of that sacrifice than as identified with it.

We find a contrasting emphasis in the eucharistic theology of the twentieth century, in the type of thinking begun by Dom Odo Casel, O.S.B. Here, the issue of the identity of the sacrifice comes to the fore. The event of the Eucharist is seen to be somehow the same event that took place in the redemptive Death and Resurrection of Jesus. When this theme becomes prominent, however, the issue of the Real Presence seems to fall into the background. We may insist that the Eucharist reenacts the death of Jesus, but then what are we to say about the Real Presence, apart from the event of the Eucharistic celebration? In this perspective, does Transubstantiation have any role?

I would claim that the two issues are closely related, and that we cannot have the one without the other: no Transubstantiation without identity of sacrifice, and no identity of sacrifice without Transubstantiation. Both issues are essential, but emphasis will be placed on the one or the other depending on the theological approach we use. It may be that a more ontological approach will emphasize Transubstantiation, while a more phenomenological approach will emphasize the identity of the sacrifice.

### *The celestial focus of the eucharistic action*

A feature of the Eucharist that is important for both issues is the focus of the central prayer of the Eucharist, the Eucharistic Canon, which extends from the Preface to the Great Amen. This entire prayer is directed toward God the Father. The Preface speaks to the Father and recalls his saving actions in a manner appropriate to the feast of the day. The Sanctus is especially important for determining the direction of the prayer. It places us among the choirs of angels, as we repeat the song of the Seraphim cited in chapter 6 of Isaiah. The last part of the Preface, which leads into the Sanc-

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 83, a. 1.

2. *Ibid.*, III, q. 83, a. 1, ad 2.

3. *Ibid.*, III, q. 83, a. 1, ad 1.

thus, often mentions the articulated ranks of angels and it also mentions the saints. As we say the Eucharistic Canon, we join the angels and saints and take part in the celestial Eucharist, the glory given to the Father by the Son who redeemed the world, the Lamb presented in heaven as slain, the Mystical Lamb, so profoundly depicted by Jan van Eyck in the Ghent Altarpiece. Our worldly Eucharist joins with the celestial. Dr. Eric Perl, who is a member of the Orthodox Church, once said that he was asked by a student in a religion class whether there would be a Eucharist in heaven; he said that he answered, "There won't be anything else." The angels and saints in heaven participate in the action of the Son toward the Father, and we now in our Eucharist join in their participation; in the Roman Canon we pray to Almighty God, "that your angel may take this sacrifice to your altar in heaven." This celestial focus, established by the Preface and Sanctus, continues till the Great Amen, where Christ, now present on the altar, reconciles the entire created world in a return to the Father: "Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, forever and ever. Amen." The Sanctus and the Great Amen should be taken as directing us toward the celestial Eucharist and associating us with it. This focus and direction are somewhat masked when the priest faces the congregation, because it then appears that his words are being directed toward the people and not toward God the Father, and care must be taken to make this focus clear in the celebration of the Eucharist.

This participation in the heavenly Eucharist is of great importance for both the identity of the sacrifice and Transubstantiation. The celestial Eucharist is beyond time and world history. It touches history because the saving action of the Son of God took place in time, but his action was not just a temporal event. His obedience to the Father, his acceptance of the cross for our redemption, was an action in time that was related to the eternal Father. It occurred in time but touched eternity. It changed the relationship between creation and the Father. The celestial Eucharist is the eternal aspect of the death of Christ; it is not just a memorial or reminder of that event.<sup>4</sup>

4. One might ask whether the other sacraments do not also transcend time in the same way as the Eucharist; there is a difference, however, in that the other sacraments do not reenact any particular action of Christ. A baptism, for example, does not reenact any particular action performed by Christ, but the Eucharist reenacts both the Last Supper and the sacrificial death of Jesus.

His Resurrection witnesses to the eternal aspect of this action; the Risen Lord bears forever the wounds of his passion. In our present Eucharist, we join with the action of Christ not simply as a past historical action, but as the transaction between Jesus and the eternal Father, the transaction and exchange, the *communion*, between time and eternity, which subsists in the celestial Eucharist. It is because of this action that we can join in the Great Amen, in which the created universe is brought back to the Father through the Son, who was the point of creation, the Word through whom the universe was created.

Only because the action of Christ touched eternity can it be reenacted as the very same action now. The identity of the sacrifice, the fact that the Eucharist reenacts an event from the past, the fact that we now are made present to a past event, is made possible because of the nature of that original and singular action. We cannot recover events in worldly and human history. Once done and past, they cannot be redone in the present; they can only be remembered or commemorated. But the action of Christ was not just an action in worldly and human history; it was an action before and toward the eternal Father; it had an eternal aspect, and so it can be reenacted now.

This celestial focus helps us understand the possibility of the Church's faith in the sameness of the sacrifice in the Eucharist and on Calvary. However, we can look at the same state of affairs from another perspective. The Church's faith in the sameness of the sacrifice is itself a witness to the celestial character of the Eucharist. Our belief that the Eucharist reenacts something from the past implies that the action of Christ was not finished once and for all, but that it is alive now and always. Our belief in the identity of the sacrifice implies that the sacrifice was not just a historical event. The Eucharist does not just remind us of what happened in the past—the Death and Resurrection of the Lord—but proclaims the eternal aspect of that event. It proclaims the fact that Christ, the incarnate Son of God, with his glorified body and blood, lives eternally before the Father.

It seems clear, then, that the celestial focus of the liturgy clarifies for us the sameness of the sacrifice. It helps us bring out the intelligibility of that sameness. But what does this focus have to do with the issue of Transubstantiation?

The bread and wine of the Eucharist become the body and blood of the Lord, but they become specifically his resurrected and glorified body and

blood. Transubstantiation should not be taken as a mere substantial change in the natural order of things. It is not as though we were to claim that a tree became a leopard but continued to look and react like a tree, or that a piece of cloth became a cat but still seemed to be cloth. I think some of the objections to Transubstantiation come from an implicit belief that such a worldly change of substance is what is being claimed. Rather, it is not simply the worldly substance of the body and blood of the Lord that are present in the Eucharist, but his glorified body and blood, which share in the eternity of the celestial Eucharist. The bread and wine are now the vehicles for the presence of the eternal Christ, the eternal Son who became incarnate for us, died and rose from the dead, and is eternally present to the Father. The ontology of the Holy Trinity is part of the Church's faith in Transubstantiation.

In fact, does not the glorified Christ *need* something like the eucharistic presence in order to allow his death to be present to the world? The teleology of the Incarnation moves not only to the sacrificial Death and Resurrection, but also toward the Eucharist, in both its celestial and its worldly forms; the Incarnation finds its end and completion in the Eucharist, which allows the risen Christ to be "scattered" throughout the world even while he subsists within the Holy Trinity. The glorified body of Christ is present to the Father and to the angels and saints, and it is this body and blood that are the substance of the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Through the eucharistic continuance of the Son's act of obedience, glory is given to the Father not only in the heavens but also on the earth. We might suggest that this eucharistic presence of Christ is in fact a more fitting expression to the world of his glorified life than continued resurrection appearances would have been.

I would even venture to raise the following question: Does not the denial of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist bring in its train a dilution of our trinitarian faith? Does it not make us drift toward a unitarian understanding of divinity? If we question whether the Son is truly present in the Eucharist, are we not led to question whether he was truly present in the Incarnation, and then whether he is truly distinguished from the Father? If we begin to think this way, do we not begin to take the sacraments as images and metaphors of a single divine principle? It is true that there are other presences of Christ—in the Church, as his mystical body, in the words

of Scripture, in the believer, the confessor, and the martyr—but all these depend on his primary presence, achieved by his own action and through his own words, in the Eucharist.

The Christian tradition of the East, with its strong focus on the celestial liturgy, encounters less difficulty with the true presence of Christ in the sacrament than does the West, precisely because of this focus and the correlative belief in the eucharistic presence of the glorified Christ. We in the West tend to think primarily in terms of human psychology and worldly history, and these concerns make us raise problems that may be less likely to arise in the East.

I have one more point to make concerning the manner in which the Eucharist represents and reenacts the Death and Resurrection of the Lord. The issue is often formulated in the following way: we ask how the celebration of the Eucharist can represent the death of Christ *to us*. But to pose the question this way is to begin at a derivative stage, not at the true beginning. First and foremost, the Eucharist represents and reenacts the death of the Lord *before the eternal Father*. The Eucharistic Canon is directed toward the Father, and even the representation of the Last Supper, in the institutional narrative and words of consecration, is directed first and foremost to him. Now, can we truly think that this representation before the Father of the death of the Lord is only an image, only a commemoration, only a human remembrance? God does not remember in the way we do, and the past is not lost to him the way it is to us. The redemptive action of the Son is eternally present to the Father, and this action is carried out by the person of the Son in the Eucharist. The identity of the Eucharist and Calvary before the Father secures its identity before us. The Mass and Calvary are the same before the Father, *and therefore* they can be the same for us.

### *Matter and spirit*

I would like to develop more fully the idea that the Eucharist embodies and presents the glorified body of Christ. To do this, I must comment on how matter and spirit are related in the world. I will distinguish three different points of view.

In the first viewpoint, one that is typified by a darwinian understanding, what we call spirit is an epiphenomenon of matter. All we have in the universe is matter in motion. Matter may be very mysterious, and in its de-

velopment it gives rise to marvelous kinds of bodies, such as plants, animals, and even human beings, but all these apparently "higher" things are really congelations of matter and material forces. Most of the writers in cognitive science, those who try to reduce consciousness and rational processes to the activities of the brain and nervous system, would subscribe to this understanding. In this viewpoint, of course, spirit and personality are simply complex forms of matter. I have recently seen this reductionist viewpoint expressed in the following way: it is not that God has created the heavens and the earth, but the heavens and the earth have created God, because through evolution they have brought about the human organism, which in turn projects the idea of a divine being.

The second viewpoint is an Aristotelian or Stoic understanding, one that is a rather spontaneous, natural way of looking at the world. It is not reductive, but holds that matter and spirit are mixed in the universe. There are purely material levels of being, but there are also more spiritual and rational levels of being, and each interacts with the other. The spiritual dimension shapes matter and brings about complexities and intelligibilities that sheer matter could not. The existence of life and thinking beings bears the imprint of spirit. Most attempts to refute the Darwinian, reductive point of view aim at reestablishing this kind of understanding of the complementarity of matter and spirit.

The third viewpoint, which is biblical and creationist, holds that the spiritual or the personal dimension of being precedes the material. Matter exists, but it has come into being through a personal action of God. "Before" there was matter, there was and is God, who is spirit and life. The personal dimension, in this viewpoint, does not arise from matter, nor does it merely accompany the impersonal and the material, but rather it brings it into being. Matter and all created being might not have been, and they exist because of something like a personal choice. The eternal in some sense "precedes" the temporal and causes it to be. In this biblical understanding, the divine choice to create was carried out in sheer generosity or charity under no pressure and under no need for improvement. The generosity of Creation is the backdrop for the humility of the Incarnation and the charity of the Eucharist. In this third viewpoint, then, the personal or spiritual dimension precedes and causes the material.

Faith in the Eucharist as embodying and presenting the glorified Christ

clearly can be held only against the background of the third understanding of matter and spirit. It would not be possible in the first two viewpoints, not even in the one that mixes matter and spirit as two necessary components of the world. The Eucharist must be seen against the setting of Creation, which in turn becomes a context for the Incarnation, in which the eternal and almighty Creator enters into what he has made and becomes a part of it. He then continues his presence in this creation in a eucharistic and sacramental manner. The time and the space of the Eucharist are established by the entry of the eternal and transcendent into the created world. The Eucharist itself, because it would not be possible except against the background of this understanding of spirit and matter, is a perpetual reminder of the transcendence and power of God, which manifested themselves most fully not by spectacular cosmic effects but by the life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus the Lord.

The Real Presence in the Eucharist is therefore not just the concealed presence of one worldly substance under the appearances of another, but the presence of the full mystery of God's being and his work, the mystery hidden from all ages and now made manifest to us, the point of the universe and of creation. It is this presence, this glory, that is the substance of the Eucharist and the core of the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Furthermore, the presence of eternity and transcendence in the Eucharist are not merely a presentation of abstract divine attributes, but the presence of the eternal Son, the Logos, who accomplishes two things in the sacrament: he gives glory to the Father and shares his life with us.

Perhaps some of the difficulties that arise in regard to the Real Presence stem from the way we understand spirit and matter in the world. We may unconsciously subscribe to the first or the second understanding that we have listed above: that of reductive materialism or of a Stoic or Aristotelian mixture of matter and spirit. If these two ways of understanding the world remain in the background for us, we will not be able to accept the idea of Transubstantiation. If we propose to interpret the Eucharist in a manner that will speak to a culture that accepts the Darwinian universe, one that accepts only a materialist and technological sense of being, it will be impossible for us to conform to the Church's faith in this mystery.

But we should not think that it is inevitable that a materialist view of nature will triumph; we ought not fear that the studies of life and cognition



will reduce life, consciousness, and thinking to mechanical processes. Instead, we should look at the issue in the other way: we have every reason to marvel at the fact that matter enters into life and rationality, that it is assumed into living organisms and into human consciousness and human exchanges, such as moral actions. Matter enters into the realm of spirit and reason. Matter is already spiritualized when it is elevated into life and rationality.

The Eucharist extends this trajectory into a still greater spiritualization of matter, one that could not have been anticipated by our study of natural phenomena. The Logos through whom the world was created becomes part of creation, not only in the Incarnation, when he became united with a human nature, but also in the Eucharist, under the appearances of bread and wine. Matter is elevated into a new condition in the Eucharist, in a way that expresses its exaltation in the glorified body and blood of Christ.

I believe that the Gospel of St. John, and especially the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John, provides an admirable context for the eucharistic celebration and for eucharistic devotion. The Real Presence in the Eucharist calls to mind our belief in the God who was in the beginning and the Word who was with God, who was God, even in that beginning, "before" there was matter. The Eucharist steers us in that direction and into that context, it is a perpetual reminder of the transcendence of God, both when it is celebrated and overcomes the confinements of time and history by reenacting in the present the sacrifice of Christ, and in the tabernacle, where the saving event is not immediately reenacted, but where Christ is present for our contemplation and prayer. St. Thomas expresses this dimension of the Eucharist when he draws on Aristotle and says, "It is the law of friendship that friends should live together." He goes on to say that Christ "has not left us without his bodily presence in this our pilgrimage, but he joins us to himself in this sacrament in the reality of his body and blood."<sup>5</sup>

### *Transformation of matter*

In the Blessed Sacrament, matter becomes a vehicle for the presence of the transcendent God. Can we reflect on how this occurs?

5. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 75, a. 1.

One of the points made repeatedly by St. Thomas in his discussion of the Eucharist is the contrast he draws between the Eucharist and the other sacraments. In the other sacraments, the material element—the water in baptism, the oils used in anointing—is set apart or consecrated simply for the use that is made of it. These sacraments terminate in the application made of the matter (for example, water is used in baptizing). In the Eucharist, in contrast, the matter itself is transformed: the sacrament finds its completion in the change of the material element.<sup>6</sup> The bread is not only used to nourish us but is changed in its substance. The Eucharist involves Transubstantiation while the other sacraments do not. The baptismal water and the oils used in anointing remain water and oil.

To bring out the meaning of such a change in matter, let us examine another way in which matter is elevated into a higher use. Consider the kind of elevation of matter that occurs when something material is made into a human symbol. A piece of cloth is made into a flag. When this occurs, the cloth becomes more than cloth. Within the human context, the cloth truly is a flag and certain responses become appropriate while others are inappropriate and even provocative. No one cares if you burn a piece of cloth or stomp on it, but people do care if you burn a flag or trample upon it. Would this paradigm be helpful in speaking about the Eucharist? To make the case stronger, suppose we said that the Eucharist is a more substantial symbol than a flag, because the transformation is brought about not simply by human agreement but by the declaration made by Christ, with divine authority. The bread is the body of Christ not simply by human convention but by divine assertion, and therefore it would remain so even apart from the continued agreement of believers. The bread and wine of the Eucharist would take on a new sense, a paradigmatic sense, within a community of shared meaning.

But this model fails, because the logic and the being of such symbols is not adequate to the Church's eucharistic faith. Even though a flag truly is a flag, it also remains cloth, while the bread does not remain bread. This fact is brought out by a remarkable comment of St. Thomas, who observes that in the Eucharistic Prayer Christ is quoted not as saying, "*This bread is my body*,"

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 73, a. 1, ad 3; q. 74, a. 2, ad 3; q. 78, a. 1.

but "*This* is my body." If Christ had said "this bread" was his body, then the thing referred to would still be bread, but the simple demonstrative pronoun "this" without a noun implies that it is not bread any longer.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, to say that in the Eucharist the bread and wine remain what they are but acquire a new signification would contradict the logic of the Incarnation. Christ was not simply a prophet who pointed out the way to the Father; he *was* the way to the Father. He did not just communicate the truth about God, he was the Word of God. The believer comes to the Father not by the way and the truth that are signified by Christ, but through Christ himself, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Analogously, if the bread and wine were to remain bread and wine, they would point us toward the Death and Resurrection of Christ and toward the Son of God, they would signify him and what he did, but they would not be his presence and the presence of his action among us. The Eucharist would fail to continue, sacramentally, the form of the Incarnation, and we would be deprived of the presence, the bodily presence, of the way, the truth, and the life. The Incarnation would have been withdrawn from the world.

The Eucharist continues the Incarnation, but there are important differences between the two mysteries. In the Incarnation, when the Word became flesh, the divine nature did not transubstantiate the human nature. It did not take the place of the human being. To say that it did would fall into a monophysite interpretation of the mystery. To understand the Incarnation as a transubstantiation would imply that the human nature ceased to be but only appeared to be when united with the divine. Instead, the human substance, soul and body, is integrally present in the Incarnation. In this respect, the human substance in the Incarnation is different from the substance of bread in the Eucharist. The human substance, soul and body, remains intact, but the substance of the bread does not.

Indeed, it is the very material and bodily quality of the Incarnation that calls for Transubstantiation in the Eucharist. If Christ is to be present in the sacrament, he must be present in his divine and human natures; if his human nature is to be present, it must be present in both soul and body. And if his body is to be present, the bread cannot be. The one thing cannot be two material substances, both bread and a human body, not even the glor-

fied human body of Christ. If it is the one it cannot be the other. The two bodily natures exclude one another, and it is the bodily presence of Christ that is specifically emphasized in the words of consecration. The body of Christ is not *with* the bread but takes the place of the bread in the change we call Transubstantiation. If we deny this change, we deny the bodily presence of the glorified Christ, and hence we deny the presence of Christ. Without Transubstantiation the sacramental presence of Christ would not occur.

In the Eucharist, therefore, it is the radical *worldliness* of the Incarnation, its materiality, that calls for Transubstantiation in the Eucharist. It is the *incarnate* divinity, the Word made flesh and not simply the divine nature, that is present in the Eucharist. If I may use the terms, the body of Christ, because it is material, "displaces" or "dislodges" the bread. Whatever matter may be, it takes place, it is located. Through Transubstantiation, the bodily presence of the transcendent divinity, in the person of the Son, takes its place among us in a manner that follows upon the Incarnation, and it does so by replacing the substance of bread and wine.

However, not everything of the bread ceases to exist in the Eucharist. As St. Thomas says, "the accidents, which are the proper object for the senses, are genuinely there."<sup>8</sup> The accidents and natural characteristics of bread are truly there; we should not think of the species of bread and wine as merely images in our minds. They are part of the world and they provide the place where Christ is present. St. Thomas says that these accidents serve as a kind of subject for the presence of Christ: "Strictly speaking, there is no subject in this change. . . . All the same, the accidents which remain do bear a certain resemblance to a subject."<sup>9</sup> The sacramental presence of the Word occurs here in this place and at this time, and it thus bears the signature of the Incarnation. The visible and tangible forms of bread and wine, the forms present to the senses, remain as they are, but the substantial form, the form present to the understanding, does not: the body of Christ is now present to the understanding, but to an understanding enlightened by faith, an intelligence guided not by vision, touch, or taste, but by hearing. We recall also that the Eucharist directs us toward the celestial liturgy and our future participation in it, where no sacramental presence, no appearance of bread and wine, will be needed, and where the same God who is now an object of faith will be

7. *Ibid.*, III, q. 78, a. 5; cf. q. 75, a. 3; q. 75, a. 8.

8. *Ibid.*, III, q. 75, a. 5, ad 2.

9. *Ibid.*, III, q. 75, a. 5, ad 4.

present to vision. In that celestial liturgy the bread and wine are no longer required for the presence of Christ, but his human being, the fruit of the Incarnation, does remain. For our present state, however, the bread and wine are a worldly expression of the glorified body of Christ that is present to the Father, a worldly expression that we return to the Father in the Great Amen of our Eucharistic Prayer.

### *Transubstantiation, Incarnation, and Creation*

We have discussed the way in which the logic of the Incarnation leads on to Transubstantiation, but more can be said about the interplay between these two mysteries. They should not be seen as separate truths; they are interrelated, and the two should be profiled theologically against one another. The intelligibility of each is clarified by bringing out the identities and the differences between them.

In the Incarnation, both the divine and the human substances are present, and the actions of the incarnate Word are theandric, the actions of God and man. As many of the Church Fathers claim, if the actions of Christ were not those of both God and man, our salvation could not have been achieved. We had to be saved by one like us if we were to be saved, but we had to be saved by one greater than us, by God himself, if we were to be reconciled with God and allowed to share in his life. The act of salvation sheds light on the agent who accomplishes it.

The Eucharist reenacts the same theandric action, the action of God and man, but the substance of the bread does not enter into this action. It is not the case that in the Eucharist there is the sacramental action of God, man, and also bread. If this were the case, the eucharistic action would not be the same as that of Calvary; it would be something new and different. The bread and wine must give way and not enter into the substantial action. The bread and wine do not act, and so sacramentally they are not there to act. It is true that the bread and wine are consumed and nourish our bodies, but this physical achievement belongs to the species of the Eucharist, not to its substance. It is fitting that we receive the bread and wine as an expression of the life that is given in the sacrament, but their effect on our person, though necessary as a condition, is accidental to the sacramental action. The bread and wine do not enter into the action in the way that the human substance of Christ enters into the action of the incarnate Word. Furthermore, they

are not present in the celestial liturgy, while the human nature of Christ is present and effective there. They are simply the worldly expression of that liturgy.

The term *substance* does not name a merely passive substrate. It expresses what a thing is, not only as a being but also as a source of action. We say that the substance of the Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ because the action being reenacted is that which occurred in the separation of his body and blood, in his redemptive death, and this action was defined by being the achievement of his divine and human natures. Both natures are present in the act of salvation and in its eucharistic reenactment. This divine nature, furthermore, is the one nature of the Holy Trinity, even though it is present, in the Incarnation and the Eucharist, in the person of the Son. The divine substance is the power by which the world was created; it entered into creation when the Word became man, and in the Eucharist we worship it as the origin of all things and the source of our Redemption. In the Eucharist the Creator becomes immanent in his creation not just by his causal power but also by his localized presence.

This presence of the divine nature in the Eucharist is such as to exclude the danger of pantheism from Christian belief. The concentrated presence of the Creator in the Eucharist makes it clear, by way of contrast, that God is not present in the world as the universal force and highest entity, as the Stoics understood the divine nature to be. If God becomes part of the world, he does so in the manner of the Incarnation and the Eucharist, not as a spirit or intelligence that is the governing part of the world. The Eucharist bears witness to the radical transcendence of the Christian God.

We have seen earlier that the bodily aspect of the Incarnation makes Transubstantiation necessary, because the body and blood of Christ become present, the substance of bread and wine cannot remain. While the material character of the Incarnation makes Transubstantiation necessary, it is the divine aspect of the Incarnation, the presence of the divine nature in the Incarnation, that makes Transubstantiation possible (and the possibility is prior to the necessity). Only because the divine substance becomes present in the Eucharist, as the ultimate source of the action being reenacted there, can Transubstantiation occur.

When we claim that the presence of the divine nature is a condition for the possibility of the Eucharist, we do not appeal simply to the omnipotence



of God; it is not just that God as Creator is all-powerful and could bring about the kind of change that occurs in the Eucharist. Rather, the point is that the Eucharist represents the action of the transcendent God: the redemptive Death and Resurrection of Jesus is the work of God (his primary work, greater even than Creation, revealing more profoundly who and what he is), and hence the reenactment of that action is the work of the same divine nature, the work of the transcendent Creator who recreates the world he has made. The risen Christ reveals the kind of life that is given by God and the kind of life that is lived by him. If this is the work being done, and if the divine nature is there to do it, the natural substance by which this action is represented dare not remain, even though the human nature with which the action was accomplished must remain. The bread and wine are substantially emptied out to clear a place for the action of God. If the bread and wine were still there they would continue to act and so would intervene in the single divine performance. We would not be drawn by the Eucharist toward the one action achieved on Calvary, but would partake of something simply happening now.

If the Eucharist is truly the action of God, the bread and wine cannot remain in their substance. However, if one were to claim that the Eucharist is primarily the action of the community (and not of the priest speaking in the person of Christ), then the bread and wine would remain what they are. Transubstantiation would not occur; instead, the bread and wine would become symbols of the gifts the people offer. In such an interpretation, it would not be Christ who speaks the words of consecration but the community, whether the assembly gathered here and now or the one that is said to have originally compiled the ritual and the words. Transubstantiation depends on whose action the Eucharist represents.

Both the Incarnation and Creation provide the background for the Eucharist. This relationship can be clarified by a contrast between Christ and the Blessed Virgin. The glorified body of Christ is present in the Eucharist, but the sanctified body of the Blessed Virgin could not become present in a worldly substance. The reason for the difference is that the Eucharist expresses the action of salvation, while the Blessed Virgin was and is its primary and paradigmatic recipient. It is true that her action in the *fiat* was part of her salvation and ours, but it was so in a manner different from the way the active obedience of the man Jesus was part of our salvation. Christ re-

deemed but was not redeemed, while Mary was the first of those who were redeemed. The Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin express her perfect receptivity to grace, while the glorification of Christ expresses his action and victory, which is ultimately the action and victory of God himself, the work of the divine nature. It is this action that is present in the Eucharist, in such a manner that the bread and wine that are its expression cannot remain as a part of the achievement.

### *The revelation that occurs in the Eucharist*

As the central action in the life of the Church, the Eucharist continuously discloses the mysteries of Christian faith. The action of the Eucharist complements the words of Scripture and the teaching of the Church. It reveals the Resurrection, bearing witness to the fact that Christ is alive now and a source of life and light for us. By revealing the risen Christ, the Eucharist discloses the Incarnation, since the Resurrection confirms the presence of God in Christ. Through the Incarnation, the Eucharist discloses the mystery of Creation, the fact that the God who became incarnate was also the one who created the world out of the sheer generosity we call charity. By revealing the mystery of Creation, the Eucharist reveals the divine nature as transcendent to the world and yet acting in it, both giving it being and recreating it through the mystery of Christ. Finally, the Eucharist reveals the truth that the divine nature is present to us in the person of the Son, and that therefore the life of God is trinitarian.

The Eucharist is at the center of a series of transformations that converge from two directions, from God and from the world. God, in his infinite charity and in his wisdom and art, created the world and transformed elements of it into man, into a body that lives a rational and spiritual life. God then assumed a human substance and entered into his creation in the hypostatic union. This transformation was perfected by the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, the action that reconciled the whole of creation to the Creator. God sanctified his creation by becoming united with part of it, and he redeemed it and gave it a new form by what he accomplished in that union: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God" (II Corinthians 5:17-18). These transformations, from Creation to Redemption, were accomplished by God. From the other extreme, from the created world, material substances, wheat and grapes, be-

come transformed by human art into bread and wine. These substances are again transformed in the Eucharist, when they become involved in the enactment of God's redemptive action, the continued representation of his presence and activity in the world. The bread and wine, the work of human hands, are our humble gift to God. As Mary offered the human body to the Word, we offer him our bread and wine. He becomes united with them, but in a manner different from his union with a human substance in the Incarnation. In the Eucharist, the transformation is a Transubstantiation, in which the bread and wine give way entirely, except in appearance, to the presence of God, the Creator and Redeemer. The Eucharist in turn is the pledge of future glory for those who partake of it, transforming them into the image of the Son: "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

The logic of the Incarnation leads to the change of substance in the Eucharist. Let us conclude by turning to a particular moment of the Incarnation, to the Transfiguration, the transformation of Christ that took place, on the mountain, before Peter, James, and John. The Eucharist is a reversal of the Transfiguration. When Christ was transfigured, his substance remained the same but his appearance changed. In the Eucharist the opposite occurs. The appearances of bread and wine remain the same, but what they are has changed. They look no different, but they are now understood to be the presence of Christ and his act of Redemption. Both the Transfiguration and Transubstantiation express Christ's glory, the one to the eye and the other to faith, the one before his Passion, the other afterward. The splendor of the vision is contrasted with the humility of the bread and wine. These differences notwithstanding, it is fitting for us, as we participate in the Eucharist, to respond as did Peter, James, and John: to be moved by gratitude and fear of the Lord, and to sense the meaning of his Passion and Resurrection, the meaning they have before the Father and for us.

[ 8 ]

## THE IDENTITY OF THE BISHOP

### *A Study in the Theology of Disclosure*

Our conference is dedicated to the theme of ecclesiology in the light of the Second Vatican Council, and the specific topic I was asked to speak about is the identity of the bishop.<sup>1</sup> I think we all are familiar with the concepts of ecclesiology, the episcopal office, and the Council. However, the title assigned to me also mentions something called the theology of disclosure. This is a term we may not be familiar with, so let me begin with a few remarks about it.

### *Theology of disclosure*

I would like to define the theology of disclosure as a form of theological thinking that makes use of phenomenology. Why should theology make use of this philosophical form? Not just in order to connect theology with a recent and contemporary type of philosophy—in other words, not because it might seem to be the fashionable thing to do—but because something important can be achieved by this kind of thinking. Christian theology has always been given a certain style by the philosophy it has incorporated in itself. Patristic thinking was marked by Neoplatonism and Stoicism, and

<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally given at a conference held at the John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, D.C., in November 2003. The conference was entitled *The Call to Holiness and Communion: Vatican II on the Church*. It was sponsored by the Sacred Heart Seminary of the Archdiocese of Detroit.